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George Edward Woodberry

A STUDY *of* HIS POETRY

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GEORGE EDWARD WOODBERRY

A STUDY OF HIS POETRY



G. H. Woodberry

George Edward Woodberry

A Study of his Poetry

By

Louis V. Ledoux



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GEORGE E. WOODBERRY

THE STORY OF ELEUSIS

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CHAPTER I.

I.

George Edward Woodberry, whose ancestors, coming from English Devon, had been among the first settlers of Beverly, Massachusetts, was born there in the family home facing the sea, on May 12, 1855; the son of Henry Elliott and Sarah Dane (Tuck) Woodberry. The New England tradition was his birth-right; and the love of the sea, for many of his people had been sea-faring folk, and his boyhood was passed where the sea-interest is greater than that of the land. Inherited associations and habits of thought form the background of any writer's work, whether he be a carrier on of the tradition in which he was bred or in revolt against it; and any estimate of Mr. Woodberry's poetry must take into account the stem from which it sprang, the roots deep in the New Englandism of other days and the New England sap which, as his spiritual vision widened, gave something of its own character to the half-exotic blossoms of his later verse.

The chronicles of The North Shore—that most beautiful part of Massachusetts which lies between Boston and Cape Ann—are full of the doings of the Woodberry family. John Woodberry, who came to Salem in 1626 and was an original member of the first church there, was, with his brother William, among the four who first established a permanent settlement at Beverly. In 1635 he was granted a farm of two hundred acres and it is likely that he or his son was one of the interested petitioners who requested a few years later that the name of the settlement be changed for reasons of which “the first is the great dislike and

discontent of many of our people for this name of Beverly, because (we being but a small place) it has caused on us a constant nickname of *Beggarly*, being in the mouths of many." They seem to have been a godly lot—these Woodberrys—founders and deacons of churches; men who were ready to fight and die for their country when the need came, and in their daily lives had to do with the sea, building ships and trading. Of such a stock the poet came; the love of the sea is in his verse—the color and sound of it—with the New England sense of spiritual and moral values, the New England seriousness, and passion for things of the soul.

After a boyhood spent in Beverly wandering among the fields in search of flowers or drifting day-long on the bay, Mr. Woodberry went up to Harvard, leaving, it would seem, among his school-fellows at Exeter where he had early identified himself with the literary life, the reputation of a poet. At Harvard, Lowell and Charles Eliot Norton quickly discerned the promise of the lad and it is said that the former kept a room at his house where young Woodberry would be welcome when he wished to come. The class oration which he prepared for graduation was not delivered because certain members of the faculty feared that it might be misinterpreted by the more conservative part of the audience, but was privately printed by the Signet Society in an edition of thirty copies; and *The Relation of Pallas Athene to Athens* has become the first of those scarce little pamphlets now eagerly sought by collectors. Graduation from Harvard in 1877 was followed by some years of teaching in the University of Nebraska, of wandering in Southern Europe, of reviewing and editing, with occasional creative work in prose or in verse. In 1891 Mr. Woodberry was called to Columbia University where he remained for

more than a decade as head of the department of Comparative Literature, winning among the students friends whose continued and peculiar devotion, illustrated by the recent formation of a society to foster his ideals in American life, testifies to his power as a teacher and his unique influence as an inspiration to the young. Since leaving Columbia, he has made his home at Beverly, not connected with any institution but giving occasional courses of lectures at various universities, and spending much of his time in that Mediterranean world—Southern Italy and Sicily, North Africa, Greece and Asia Minor—whose culture has been a vitally important element in his thought and in his work.

Mr. Woodberry has received many academic honors, and has written a number of distinguished prose books which rank with the finest of modern interpretative criticism; but the work that has probably meant most to him, and will probably mean most to his readers, is that which the present study is designed to treat, his verse.

II.

The most constant characteristics of Mr. Woodberry's poetry are its insistence upon spiritual values and its passionateness—the intensity of the emotion it seeks to express. His poems, except for a few occasional pieces, seem the record of passionate hope, of passionately cherished ideals, of disappointment or disillusion passionately felt, and, in some of his later work, of convictions passionately held. He burns with that intensity of emotion which is characteristic of the creative artist; but in him the object of passion is two-fold—tragic opposites which are in perpetual conflict. One—the white horse of the Phaedrus—is the yearning, intense desire to remain perpetually in the

ideal, spiritual world, to realize it in life, to bring it to others; its opposite is an almost equal devotion to aspects of the world of sense, an ecstatic appreciation of color and fragrance, with a fineness of perception and rendering in the light effects that suggests Turner or Shelley. His poems glow with color. Superficially he is the poet of light, but considering more deeply, one gets the impression of a man who had seen among dark tree-trunks a fitful gleaming of the Grail, and, having given himself wholly, passionately to the quest, is unmindful of all save the fleeting vision and the unattainment. The ideal world is one in which many spiritually gifted people have taken holiday; to some it seems like home, but there are none who live there, for its children are exiles. A passionate devotion to the things of the spirit, an intense delight in visible beauty; these are the constant elements in Mr. Woodberry's poetry; the one was fostered in him by his New England heritage, the other came perhaps, as it has come to so many Northern poets, a gift of the Mediterranean world. One gives to his work a background of sad nobility, the other the warmth and color of life; but to Mr. Woodberry the two seem forces in irreconcilable conflict, the world that we call "real" with the world that we call "ideal".

*Italy, like a dream,
 Unfolds before my eyes;
 But another fairer dream
 Behind me lies;
 Could I turn from the dream that is
 To where that first light flies—
 Could I turn from the dream that was—
 In a dream life dies!*

GEORGE EDWARD WOODBERRY

*One masters the spirit of life
Through love of life to be;
I am not master, O Love,—
Thou slayest the will in me!
Give me the dream that is,—
Earth like heaven to see;
Or grant the dream that was,—
Love's immortality!*

The beauty that is seen lies open to many; the beauty that is "unseen" is visible only to a few, and to them merely in momentary glimpses as though a veil had been suddenly lifted to drop as suddenly again. Literature records many of these moments of vision, and the sadness of English poetry has largely to do with their passing; for while most in their youth have had glimpses of the ideal world, it has a way of marking for its own those who are specially endowed, and these, driven onward by an inner necessity follow the gleam among the obstacles of life, through continued unattainment to what should be, but is not always, a final disillusion; learning that in the world we know the wings of the spirit can never be wholly free. Many poets, especially those whose habit of mind fitted them to receive the Platonic idealism, have treated the subject, but in the work of only a few is the record of the vision and its passing, the quest, the disillusion, so preëminent a part as it is in Mr. Woodberry's. This is the golden thread which a critic must follow in order to find the spiritual and the poetic value of the work under consideration; the technique, and that glow of color in the pages which makes many of the poems seem as though they had been bathed in light, are less important subjects of discussion, though all are correlated and work together to produce the total effect.

III.

Another trait which is obvious in Mr. Woodberry's work, and which it may be as well to examine before following our golden thread, is the growing externality of his interests. The early poems, as is natural, are chiefly concerned with the individual, the moods of the soul and its reactions; but through them there runs a desire to be of service to the race, a conviction of destiny that will make the personal soul an active agent in bringing a better world. In considering Mr. Woodberry's poetry chronologically this thought is seen to develop until the chief interest is outside of the individual who comes finally to be conceived as merely a part of a whole—a single pulsation in the rhythm of the universe, rather than as an entity self-bounded and self-sufficient. The change is paralleled by a growth from purely personal feeling for New England and that older England from which it sprang, through the Americanism of *My Country* and certain of the sonnets, to an enthusiasm for what might be called world-citizenship without nationality; a conviction of absolute equality and brotherhood that leads to an almost Franciscan devotion to the outcast and the humble. This is part of the working out of a philosophy, of the reaction of life itself upon the ideal of life, and will be discussed later; now it is time to turn to the poems themselves.

CHAPTER II.

I.

The volume of collected poems which was published in 1903 contains most of the pieces which had appeared in two earlier books and a number which had not previously been published in book form. Near the front of this volume is an early poem which Mr. Woodberry has referred to elsewhere as the "cry of dying boyhood," and which, though it is not so uniformly felicitous in expression as some others, shows clearly through images of the northern lights the poetic mood we have attempted to describe. Like the false dawn of those flashing lights is the dream in the heart of a boy, youth's aspiration toward the ideal world, youth's glowing trust in the things of the spirit; and like it also is the subsequent disillusion when the young soul perceives by the dying glow of its own fire the broken dreams and hopes which were the sword and shield of its chivalry. When youth lies wounded, it does not know that wounds may heal, and the poem is a poem of youth, true to the mood and repetitive of an ancient cry.

FALSE DAWN:

*God dreamt a dream ere the morning woke
Or ever the stars sang out;
The glory, although it never broke,
Filled heaven with a golden shout;
And when in the North there's a quiver and beam
Of mystical lights that heavenward stream,
The heart of a boy will dream God's dream.*

*O Norns, who sit by the pale sea's capes,
Loosen the wonderful shine!
The glamour of God hath a thousand shapes
And every one divine.*

*Dartle and listen o'er the blue height;
Drift and shimmer, flight on flight;
The heart of a boy is God's delight.*

*O, clamber and weave with the Milky Way
The Rose in the East that sprang,
From star to star, with blossom and spray,
On heaven's gates to hang!
O Vine of the Morning, cling and climb,
Till the stars like birds in your branches chime!
The heart of a boy is God's springtime.*

*'Tis dawn that shadows the glowing roof!
'Tis Light with the Dragon strives!
Ah, Night's black warp with the rainbow-woof
The shuttle of Destiny drives.*

*They swerve and falter, gather and fly,
Wane, and shiver, and slip from the sky—
O Norns, is the heart of a boy God's lie?*

*O Childless Ones, would your blind charms
Might seal our darling's eyes!
Dead, with the dead Dawn in his arms,
In the pale north Light lies.
Glimmer and glint, O fallen fire!
The lights of heaven like ghosts expire;
The heart of a boy is God's desire.*

*O dream God dreamt ere the morning woke
 Or ever the stars sang out;
 O glory diviner than ever broke,
 Of the false, false dawn the shout!
 False dawn, false dawn, false dawn—
 Alas, when God shall wake!
 False dawn, false dawn, false dawn—
 Alas, our young mistake!
 False dawn, false dawn, false dawn—
 O heart betrayed, break, break!*

It may be said in passing that Mr. Woodberry seems always to have had a special feeling for youth. His books contain a little gallery of portraits of children—the child who touched him in the city street, the Ionian boy, the orphans found wandering at Delphi, and a whole row of young Sicilians, all of whom are seen so vividly against their backgrounds as to suggest an unusual sense of contour and color in the author.

*Boy on the almond bough,
 Clinging against the wind,
 A-sway from foot to brow,
 With the emerald sea behind;—*

Could a picture be painted more deftly? Obviously the man who writes such lines as these has a feeling for children; and in his treatment of them there are notes of reverence and of sadness, a somewhat Platonic or Wordsworthian reverence for the young heart in which the golden dream still lives, and the sadness of one who, resting his hand on a child's head, thinks of the lessons that must be learned, the griefs that must be endured.

II.

Something of Mr. Woodberry's own youth, of value to us because its moods are a part of common experience, can be seen in *The North Shore Watch*, an elegy for the friend with whom much of his boyhood at Beverly had been passed. The poem was first printed (in a subscription edition of two hundred copies) while the poet was still in his twenties, but it is one that has been given high praise and that shows with his native idealism that colorfulness of expression, that sense of sea-backgrounds, which have been noted as among the external characteristics of his work. It is typical of the poetry of youth with its references to field excursions and to boating, its sense of intimate comradeship with nature, its exaltation of friendship, and in the poignancy of its grief for the loss of one who was

First dead of all my dead that are to be.

Young also in its idealism and in its recoil at the revelation of phases of life first revealed at the close of boyhood, the poem moves forward through a succession of sea-pictures and glimpses of the pine-hung Northern Shore, seen at dawn or sunset when "pools of opal gem the windless bay," or when, wrapped in more mysterious umbrage,

*. . . the dark pines, whose heart is like the sea's,
Mourn for one darling flower they nurtured here.*

The solution of the poem is Shelleyan: Through love "we look toward life with conquering eyes"; and in it is expressed a faith in the endurance of Beauty, a conviction of the things that are seen being merely

temporal, and those that are unseen eternal, which, though with many it is a passing mood of youth illustrating the natural affinity between the young soul and the doctrines of Platonic idealism, is in Mr. Woodberry the first expression of a belief passionately held or clung to with passionate regret. *The North Shore Watch* is a poem of youth, young in its idealism and in its melancholy; and it is one to which the heart of youth makes quick response—a twilight thing with the colors of the north in it, untouched as yet by Mediterranean splendor, though already reaching out in imagination to that more vivid eastern world where the friend for whom the poet mourns had gone in the glow of his own youth and found darkness.

*What though o'er him the tropic sunset bloom,
 With hyacinthine hues and sanguine dyes,
 And down the central deep's profoundest gloom
 Soft blossoms, fallen from the wreathèd skies,
 The seas imparadise?
 With light immingling, colors, dipped in May,
 Through multitudinous changes still endure—
 Orange and unimagined emeralds pure
 Drift through the softened day;
 "Alas," he whispers, "and art thou not nigh?
 Earth reaches now her height of beauty ere I die."*

Extended quotation is unnecessary, but the stanzas which lead to the final landscape pictures may be given as expressing the intellectual conclusions of the poem and as sufficiently illustrative of the verse movement:

*Beauty abides, nor suffers mortal change,
 Eternal refuge of the orphaned mind;
 Where'er a lonely wanderer, I range,*

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*The tender flowers shall my woes unbind,
The grass to me be kind;
And lovely shapes innumerable shall throng
On sea and prairie, soft as children's eyes;
Morn shall awake me with her glad surprise;
The stars shall hear my song;
And heaven shall I see, whate'er my road,
Steadfast, eternal, life's impregnable abode.*

*Love, too, abides, and smiles at savage death,
And swifter speeds his might and shall endure;
The secret flame, the unimagined breath,
That lives in all things beautiful and pure,
Invincibly secure;
In Him creation hath its glorious birth,
Subsists, rejoices, moves prophetic on,
Till that dim goal of all things shall be won
Men yearn for through the earth;
Voices that pass we are of Him, the Song,
Whose harmonies the winds, the stars, the seas, pro-
long.*

III.

Agathon, a dramatic poem first published in the volume of 1890, but privately printed before that by some of his devoted students at the University of Nebraska, is Mr. Woodberry's first extended treatment of the theme that has haunted him life-long,—the conflict in the soul between love of the beauty that is perceived by the senses and that which is perceived by the spirit, youth's final rejection of what is transient, and definite self-consecration to the ideal, despite the earthly hopelessness of such service:

The love that mates with heaven weds in the grave.

This poem takes us at once into the heart of philosophic idealism; it expresses a definite philosophy of life, and while with many poets criticism could confine itself mainly to the pointing out of external poetic excellencies—the beauties of phrase and music—in Mr. Woodberry's work the intellectual and spiritual elements are so important that more attention must be given to what he has to say than to how he says it. When the subject matter of poetry is essentially poetic the manner of its expression takes immediately its proper place of secondary importance. Mr. Woodberry has the technical mastery of his art, and, what is far more, he has that peculiar ability to make magical haunting phrases, lines that remain in the memory; to evoke pictures with a word, to illumine by sudden flashes of insight, which is essential to poetry.

The deeper elements in such a poem as *Agathon* give expression to thoughts and experiences which, though usually realized less intensely, are common to the more sensitive natures among mankind, and make a direct human appeal, recalling to the reader his own past phases of consciousness when life was all ahead and the soul stood confident in unstained armor. Looked back to, there is pathos about these moods—the pathos of Richard II. deposed by Bolingbroke. The perception of impermanence in the world, the decay of love, the fading of beauty, is that which often enough gives the first rude shock of awakening; the world we knew or thought we knew is gone, and in its stead is a universe in which life is but a dream in the night of death, a moment's glow in the northern sky; beauty a malign phase of transitoriness and love an emblem of mockery. The virgin arms are stained, and after their first defeat few are able to see again the gleaming

of the Grail. Most are absorbed, during the later years, by the daily routine of life, seeing only what is about them, desiring only the things of this world; "but some whose eyes were more divinely touched" carry with them to the end a sense of exile, a nostalgia for the land across whose borders the eyes of boyhood looked when mists closed in and the vision was blotted from all but memory. For such, the clouds are occasionally lifted, and for them the value of life lies wholly in the frequency and duration of the moments of vision when the soul feels its wings, and, in the radiance of the eternal, sees once more a world of permanence and of spiritual values—an ideal world which is realized to be of greater actuality than the transitory phenomena perceived daily by the senses. It is only the ideal that has actual reality.

The machinery of the poem, which is simple enough to one who has even a rudimentary knowledge of Platonic thought and imagery, is lucidly explained in the Argument, but the peculiar success of it is that a poem so burdened with philosophic meaning is never overweighted. It has the glow of spring upon it—a richer spring turning to summer; it expresses the nobility of youth—such youth Plato must have had when he walked with his master, or as, when death had claimed him, his friends thought of in Sir Philip Sidney—clear-eyed and familiar with the stars. It has the same lovely landscapes, though here they are of the Mediterranean world, but it has a richer music than that of *The North Shore Watch*, a greater power of verbal evocation, a more mature technique and mastery of line and phrase. There are many things in *Agathon* which have not been touched on in this brief résumé, much observation of life, much wisdom; but, like its predecessor, it is a subjective, what might be

called a centripetal poem, the author's interest being still drawn inward, and directed mainly toward the relation between the individual and the universe, or rather toward the effect of the universe on the person. Only in his later work does the interest broaden until individual experience is seen merely as a pulsation in the eternal rhythm—a falling wave which though distinguishable for a moment, lives only as part of an infinite whole, a manifestation of something greater than itself.

IV.

The group of lyrics gathered together under the collective title of *Wild Eden* and first published in 1899 form a distinctly different part of the volume under consideration and represent to many the height of Mr. Woodberry's achievement. *Wild Eden* is the poet's tribute to the beauty of the earth. In these lyrics, the two opposing forces which the first quoted poem described as in conflict, seem to have ceased for a time contending for the poet's allegiance; the love of the beauty that is seen fills and satisfies him, what might be called his ascetism appearing only in occasional moods of regret or self-reproach. In the main they are exquisite love-poems, almost touching in their tenderness and spirituality; or nature-poems written by one who knows whereof he speaks and who has loved the out-of-doors in all weathers: The bat and the humming bird are dear to him; he has watched devotedly through sunlit, musing hours the bees in the linden's bloom, the garden flowers; he has known the exhilaration of the storm and reveled in the might of the sea.

The daily aspects of nature come to Mr. Woodberry with the vividness of a revelation; he brings that emotional intensity which has been noted as a

characteristic, to all that he feels or sees, and the lyrics seem to spring spontaneously from his lips as though the emotion that was in him forced him to find unpremeditated relief in the creative act.

*A voice in the roaring pine wood,
A voice in the breaking sea,
A voice in the storm-red morning,
That will not let me be.*

*Might in the pine wood tossing,
Might on the racing sea,
The Weather-spirit, my brother,
Is calling, calling to me.*

These are not the words of a mystic or of one who has given himself wholly to the far glimmer of the Grail.

The love-poems have the charm and color of slow twilights, the delicacy of April, they are not things of the summer noon; and it would be difficult to represent them by quotation, for their effect is cumulative like that which comes through praying generations to a cathedral, giving in the end a sense of spiritual presence there. Some of them leave an impression of allegorical significance as though the Maiden described were, like the Lady of Shelley's *Sensitive Plant*, an incarnation of the ideal; but most are direct enough and one will serve as well as another to give the type.

THE ROSE.

*O love's star over Eden,
How pale and faint thou art!
Now lost, now seen above,
Thy white rays point and dart.*

*O, liquid o'er her move,
Shine out and take my part!
I have sent her the rose of love,
And shut in the rose is my heart.*

*The fireflies glitter and rush
In the dark of the summer mead;
Pale on the hawthorn bush,
Bright on the larkspur seed;
And long is heaven aflush
To give my rose god-speed;
If she breathe a kiss, it will blush;
If she bruise a leaf, it will bleed.*

*O bright star over Eden,
All beautiful thou art;
To-day, in the rose, the rose,
For my love I have perilled my heart;
Now, ere the dying glows
From the placid isles depart,
The rose-bathed planet knows
It is hers, my rose, my heart!*

No matter how rapt the poet's delight in the things of earth may be, the sense of their transitoriness, the perception of that eternal world whose beauty fades not, neither passes away, is never long in abeyance. Even in *Wild Eden* it comes on him occasionally and one other poem from the group must be quoted, partly because it shows curiously the sense of the eternal coming in the midst of an ecstatic appreciation of the temporal—the two being not in conflict, but the one, as it were, a means of ascent to the other—and partly because it illustrates, if our theory be correct, that gift which his Mediterranean experiences gave

the author. The poem is luminous; it is bathed in light and color—the color of Sorolla, not of Corot—and its climax in the word “incandescent” is one that no other writer would have been apt to reach with such telling effectiveness. The landscape, which probably to the poet was of New England, suggests rather to the reader some garden above Naples on a summer noon; it has the glow and color of the South, the light in which sculpture should be seen and which has made the sculptor’s art a southern one as that of the painter is northern. In its thought as in its picture, this poem is peculiarly characteristic of Mr. Woodberry.

THE ROSE BOWER.

*A crimson bower the garden glows,
 In overhanging noon, intense and bare,
 Enisled and bathed in silence and repose,
 As it were mirrored on the azure air;
 All molten lies the faint blue-shimmering deep,
 Impalpably transparent, smooth with light;
 Far in the fragrant pine’s the hot winds sleep;
 And nothing moves, and all dark things are bright.
 Yet is this fair round of tranquillity,
 This swathe of color, wheresoe’er it be,
 The burning shell of elemental strife;
 And never yet so fleeting seemed sweet life;
 So fragile this thin film of human eyes,
 In whose slight orb are springtime and sunrise;
 So perishable this incandescent frame,
 Lone Nature’s inextinguishable pyre
 Of transitory loveliness and bliss,—
 This undulating and eternal flame
 Of beauty burning in its perfumed fire,
 And passion dying in its tropic kiss.*

*Even now the sweet-hued vision sinks away,
 And from these bathing flames of night and day,
 As in my hour to come it soon may seem
 When fades to ashes earth's majestic dream,
 My soul springs up erect, alone, supreme,
 And, passing from this glory, doth survey,
 As some spent meteor's low and dying gleam,
 This radiant life that burns all else away,
 Consuming its own star; a moment, where
 About my feet morning and evening flare,
 My spirit gazes, still a stranger there,
 On this dear human home, so sweet, so fair,
 Nor yet unfolds aloft eternal wings.
 Then slowly lapsing into sensuous things,
 Once more do I inhale this glorious light,
 Breathe the soft air and feel the flowering earth,
 And on me comes the everlasting sea,
 Purple horizons, emerald-hanging woods,
 The rose bower, and love's blissful solitudes,
 Where voices of eternity
 Have wandered from my birth,
 And nothing save love's mystery
 Shines with immortal worth.*

V.

Beside *The North Shore Watch*, *Agathon*, the *Wild Edén* lyrics and the two others which have been quoted, the volume under consideration contains a number of miscellaneous poems, some of which were written for occasions such as the Emerson Centenary Service, and the memorial to the author's friend, Edwin Booth. Many of these—particularly the patriotic sonnets—are very fine, but some seem rather perfunctory and uninspired. None need detain us here. Mr. Woodberry is a poet of the inspirational type; the effectiveness of his work is largely de-

pendent upon the complete fusion of the emotional and intellectual elements that are in him, and upon the apparent spontaneity with which he sets down what an inner necessity seems to compel him to express; when the fusion is less than perfect or when expression is compelled by an external rather than an inward necessity the resulting product loses in poetic quality. He would have made a poor laureate.

Up to this period of his career, Mr. Woodberry was of the nineteenth century; his work, at least in externals, being a last, late bloom of that summer which had produced Tennyson, Arnold and Swinburne, though in his habits of mind he seemed more nearly akin, among English poets, to Wordsworth and Shelley. The publication of the collected volume of 1903 was followed by some years of poetic silence and when Mr. Woodberry spoke again he used a new language. The thought in his earlier work has developed rather than changed its direction, the emotional element has merely grown more intense, but in externals his later poetry is as distinctly of the twentieth century as the earlier is of the century that has passed. That which is of importance in the work of any poet, all that gives it its essential value, is independent of time and place, as true to New York as to Athens, to the twentieth century as to the first; and it does not matter when or where or how a poem was written; only the garment of poetry changes, only the fashion and semblance of it; and this is a fact which must never be forgotten. The essential human problems and experiences are what they were two thousand years ago, and the sea comes to the shore exactly as it did when Homer knew it. The manner of a poem may be of the twentieth century or of the renaissance, the matter of it, if it be a good poem, is eternal.

CHAPTER III.

I.

The Flight and Other Poems, a collection of about fifty new pieces, none of which is very long, was published in 1914 after an interval of eleven years. The intellectual content of many of these poems, and Mr. Woodberry delivers his message with earnest conviction of its truth, is based not on reason but in faith, and apparently is derived from a series of intuitive glimpses into the heart of the universe that are like the moments of illumination with which the records of mysticism abound. He likewise shows himself endowed with a faculty which might be called "cosmic consciousness," a perception through feeling or intuition of the intimate unity of life in all its manifestations and without regard to sequence in time. If we read him correctly, each personal soul is merely a manifestation of the race-soul, and consequently all are essentially equal. It is the poignant realization of this absolute equality and brotherhood of men, whatever may be the accidents of time and circumstance, that kindles many of these poems; and as the life-spirit itself is eternal the message of the book is one of passionate hope and joy. We can afford to forget our mistakes, to forget the actual pathos and tragedy of life, for we are only at the beginning; eternity is before us, we must spend no time in mourning or repentance, but must look forward; and the poet is raised to ecstasy in contemplation of the youth and hope with which the universe is instinct. The stars above the desert sing to him:

*"We sit in our burning spheres
 Illimitably hung;
 By the speed of light we measure the years
 On purple ether flung;
 Without a shadow time appears,
 A calendar of echoing lights
 That flame and dusk from depths and heights,
 And all our years are young.*

*"We gaze on the far flood flowing
 Unimaginably free,
 Multitudinous, mystical, glowing,
 But all we do not see;
 And a rapture is all our knowing,
 That on fiery nerves comes stealing,
 An intimate revealing
 That all is yet to be."*

Much of Mr. Woodberry's poetry, as was suggested above, is the record of a passionate search of the soul for satisfaction, and in the book now under consideration there are many descriptions of the quest. Fortunately, the author's utterances are nothing if not distinct, and we can summarize briefly: The pursuit of beauty leads nowhere, and duty, which is ordinary morality, fails to give satisfaction; these things are of the earth, earthy. Learning and wealth, as the Poverello of Assisi taught long ago, are the fetters of the soul and must be set aside with all other conventional standards, for complete spiritual freedom is essential to self-realization. It is only by making the brotherhood of man a standard of action rather than a merely theoretic creed; by feeling passionately the absolute equality of all men as sharers in the race-spirit; by forgetting our conventional

values and going as their peer among the lowly and the outcast, as St. Francis did, that we can satisfy the soul by bringing it once more into harmony with that which is eternal and essential. There are many lyrics about children, for children are spiritually free.

By no means all of the poems in the collection are burdened with the meanings that have been outlined above. Many present their moods simply; but even the ones most heavily freighted with philosophic or humanitarian ideas are saved from the slightest appearance of didacticism by the close fusion of the intellectual element with that strong emotion which is the basis of each and all. The settings are of the Mediterranean world, in Greece or Italy, Sicily or North Africa, and many of the poems have that glow of color which is characteristic of their author's work.

As poetry the simpler pieces are perhaps the more successful, for in some of the others the author is so filled with what he wishes to express that he occasionally forgets his artistry; such poems lack the external poetic graces and impress the reader rather as spontaneous outpourings than as the expression of artistically controlled emotion—as Dionysiac rather than Apollonian forms of art—but there is a strange power in them all, a vividness of imagination and intensity of emotion that make the book, whether one likes it or not, unique. The volume is divided into three sections, the third of which, though it contains much charming verse, need not concern us greatly, the first two being of far more importance to such a study as this.

II.

The first part of the 1914 volume contains, beside the poems descriptive of North Africa many of which are based on that perception which has been spoken

of as "cosmic consciousness," and some of which are certainly as fine as anything in the book, the philosophic poems, a general idea of which has already been given. From these the tone of the whole volume is derived and to them the golden thread which we have followed leads. They give further record of that quest, that search for a realization of the eternal in the temporal, to which the poet has devoted himself, but they seem also to record an actual attainment. In his earlier work he was—to use a wholly irrelevant image—like a man who being lost at night desires very earnestly to reach home but has no idea of how to get there; now he has found the way. It is not a New England lane; nor is it a path liable to grow dusty with much travel, for he who would walk therein must first set aside all conventions, deny aesthetic and moral values,—Hebraism and Hellenism—the appreciation of beauty in the ordinary meanings of the word, and that sense of duty which is a traditional inheritance and frequently has no basis in reason. To him who has discarded all these and finds himself without trammels, both mentally and spiritually free, the path is short and leads to that "Kingdom of All-Souls" where men are realized to be in absolute equality, and democracy reaches its logical conclusion. Although to the few this path is a way of salvation, it is one that it might be unwise for many to follow; but the philosophic conception, which is somewhat Nietzschean as well as somewhat Franciscan, is, in a man of Mr. Woodberry's preëminent spirituality, one of peculiar nobility and loftiness. The author's command of technique is illustrated by the fact that he has expressed his ideas in lyrical stanzas of perfect lucidity that contain many elements of pictorial and poetic value.

*We were past the good and the evil,
In the spirit's uttermost dark;
He is neither god nor devil
For whom my heart-beats hark;
And I leaned my cheek to my horse's neck,
And I sang to his ear in the dark:
"There is neither good nor evil,
There is neither god nor devil,
And our way lies on through the dark.*

*"I have never heard it or learnt it,
It is in me like my soul,
And the sights of this world have burnt it
In me to a living coal,—
The soul of man is a masterless thing
And bides not another's control;
And gypsy-broods of bandit-loins
Shall teach what the lawless life enjoins
Upon the lawless soul.*

*"When we dare neither to loose nor to bind,
However to us things appear;
When whatsoever in others we find,
We shall feel neither shame nor fear;
When we learn that to love the lowliest
We must first salute him our peer;
When the basest is most our brother,
And we neither look down on nor up to another,—
The end of our ride shall be near."*

There can be little doubt of the fact that vast revolutionary forces are at work casting the race in some new social mould and it is the coming of this new order—for him the entrance into that Kingdom of All-Souls which is beyond the realm of the sensual and

above that of the moral law—that Mr. Woodberry hails in stanzas which seem based on passionate, prophetic conviction rather than on that vague hope of an unvisualized millenium which has given a subject to so many poets. The motive is one long familiar to poetry; but the method of its working out in the intellect and the characteristic intensity of its treatment are peculiar to Mr. Woodberry. *The Way*, and *Beyond Good and Evil* are more successful in the poetic presentation of these ideas than is the poem entitled *The Kingdom of All-Souls*, which is printed first in the volume. All grew out of New England, much as the French Revolution grew out of the *ancien régime*, or Wilde's comedies from the conservatism of the Victorian era; but they could not have been written by a poet who had spent his days looking out on Beverly from his study window, or by one who had come into less intimate contact than has Mr. Woodberry with other lives in other lands. It is the human touch, the humanity in him, that turns a theory of life into a living force.

III.

The North African pieces in this section of the book take their rise in the poet's Mediterranean wanderings which brought to his native New Englandism, with the color of the South, the background of a world older in experience. They illustrate better than any others what has been said regarding his deepening sense of the impermanence of the individual, the continuity of life. There are mysterious elements in man—weird traces of atavism, perceptions of age-old wisdom—to which some are sensitive and most are not. Seldom has this shadowland on the borders of consciousness, with its strange landscapes, been painted as Mr. Woodberry paints it here, and one must turn

to his prose book on North Africa to find again the mystery of the desert-world so subtly rendered and interpreted.

These poems also show a persistent sense of dual personality, though not in the ordinary meaning of the term; it is as though the soul itself had a double existence, as a separate entity—young and inexperienced—and as an emanation of the race-soul, endowed with race consciousness and memories, and at home in a world that is not subject to change though it expresses itself in transitory manifestations. Looked at from another point of view, this duality is that of the better and the lower natures in man, the untrammelled spirit and the part that is fettered by sense—again the horses of the Phaëdrus. More will be said of this in connection with *The Roamer*; but it is now clear that the golden thread we started to follow, however it may have changed its direction, has led on unbroken. A poem called *The Riding* is, unfortunately, too long to quote, and another must be made to do service in its place, though choice is difficult, as each of the shorter ones illustrates only a part of what has been said.

THE REVENANT.

*It was at Tunis, in the shop
I told you of, where women stop,
And falls the perfume, drop by drop,
That first he came,
Who in my own flesh clotheth him,
And drugs my soul with memories dim,
And fills my body to the brim,
A perfumed flame.*

*I know new meanings in the rose,
Old channels in my sense unclose,*

*Along my nerves the music goes
 Of ancient time;
 And I am changed to what has been,—
 Silk-robed, and turbaned with the green,
 I try the thin edge damascene
 Of secret crime.*

*To leaner sheaths my spirit shrinks,
 And long-forbidden pleasures drinks;
 The mindless life that never thinks,
 Crumbles my soul;
 And o'er the ruined yellow wall
 Of what I was, there groweth tall
 A flower, whose incense like a pall
 Doth round me roll.*

*I hear a padding on the stones,
 There comes a terror in my bones,
 A throttling stills my crumpled moans
 And little cries;
 And who is he sits in my place,
 A lither soul, a softer grace,
 A lore of ages in his face,
 And world-wise eyes?*

*The Revenant! in every clime
 He uses me to be the mime
 Of weird things acted in the time
 Of long ago;
 What mysteries of heart and brain,
 What forms of beauty, forms of pain,
 The sun shall never see again,
 Revive and glow!*

*A thousand years has he been clay
 Who from me takes the soul away,
 And in my body makes his play,
 Do what I can;
 Strange visitant, in myriad shapes,
 Who in myself my being apes!
 Ah, nowhere now my soul escapes
 The Ghost of Man.*

It is impossible to close this section without referring to *Comrades*, a poem which has perhaps been liked by more people than any other of Mr. Woodberry's recent pieces. It has the sadness inevitable to retrospection and advancing age, for many comrades have departed and of those who survive each is absorbed by his own life, the close intimacies of youth being no longer possible in later years; but it is a very human poem and as direct in its appeal as anything in the book.

*O love that passes the love of woman!
 Who that hath felt it shall ever forget,
 When the breath of life with a throb turns human,
 And a lad's heart is to a lad's heart set?*

Mr. Woodberry has a native talent for writing lyrics.

IV.

The second division of the volume takes us again to the Mediterranean world, but here instead of picturing the dancing girl of the desert, seen while

*With lids that doze in panther sleep
 Bedouins upon her motions keep
 Their couchant eyes . . .*

Mr. Woodberry shows us Italy and Sicily—lands of

sunlight peopled with singing youths and maidens—and Greece where sometimes children seen against gray ruins have the sadness of ages in their eyes. On the whole, however, it is a light-hearted part of the book; the passion has burned itself out, the poet being contented to rest for a little in the sunlight, enjoying quietly what nature gives him, but ready to answer with quick response to any contact with her children. One feels in these poems the quality that has made the heart of youth turn to Mr. Woodberry himself with such unusual devotion—a quality that has made him, entirely apart from his writings, a power in the land—and fortunately for the critic most of them are of a kind about which nothing need be said in description or elucidation. In some—the beautiful stanzas on Proserpine, for example—the poet strikes a deeper note, but even in these the thought has the mellowness, the genial warmth of an October noon-tide, the author seeming to be in a mood of quiet acquiescence, accepting life as it is and willing to be warmed by the autumn sunlight, without revolt against the recognized imperfections of the order in which we live and without the tumult of unsatisfied aspiration. The poet in the land he loves and keenly responsive to all the beauty of it,

*From the silver tips of the olive tops
To the silver edge of the sea,*

has come to accept impermanence, to see in decay evolution, in transitoriness the passing on of the "torch,"—even to accept Death as something beautiful in itself and the possible opening of a doorway to new beauty, new things to be loved, fresh objects of desire. Mr. Woodberry has always been a great lover; he has loved the sky and the sea, the Italian hillsides and

the Northern Shore, but most of all he has loved the heart of youth with its aspirations and its glimpses of the eternal.

There is nothing, as was said above, in the third part of the 1914 collection which requires comment.

CHAPTER IV.

I.

The main part of this volume would end here were it not for *The First Book of The Roamer*, a fragment nearly one thousand lines long which was published in a magazine called "East and West," October, 1900. A few copies of this first book with a second added were privately printed in 1903, just as Mr. Woodberry's years of silence commenced; but the first alone can be considered here, as the second has not yet been made public, and the remaining ones, if they have been written, exist only in manuscript. The first book, however, demands a chapter by itself; for beside the fact that probably upon *The Roamer*, if it is finished, a large part of the author's fame will ultimately rest; he seems to have concentrated in the part we have of it the finest of his thought, and to have put there certainly as fine poetry as any that he has yet written.

The poem, if the whole may be judged from a part, is an epic of the soul of man; the epic conflict being between the higher and the lower natures. Apart from the machinery of the piece and its imaginary landscape, *The Roamer*—and it must be clearly understood that only the first book is before us—might be called an autobiography of the spirit. It is a reasoned, orderly account of the spiritual experiences that have been the motive of Mr. Woodberry's work from the beginning; it describes the early vision of an ideal, eternal world; the consecration of the young soul to a realization of this in daily experience; the boy knight setting out upon his quest; the gathering of the powers of darkness bringing him the perception of his

own lower nature and of the evil of the world; his wounds and wavering and final determination to cleave to the ideal, though the cost may be the only life we actually know, and though half the object of the quest—the desire to realize the eternal beauty so clearly that it can be brought to others as an element of vital significance in their lives—can never be attained. In its action the poem is of the “Alastor” type, but there is a stern gravity about it that suggests, rather, Lucretius or Dante; and Mr. Woodberry has put into the piece his own passionate earnestness. It is tempting to forecast from the introductory book the remaining course of the poem, but the part we have holds enough for our present attention; for beside the poetry—the splendid rhetoric of the pages—the thoughts suggested in it are of value as throwing much light upon a phase of human experience that is beyond the reach of most and has seldom been treated in English poetry with so keen an intellectual appreciation. The poetic reactions of Wordsworth, to whom such experiences were familiar life-long, usually issued in quiet emotion; the intellectual element was seldom present and in the few poems where it does appear there is nothing of the penetrating, intense light of *The Roamer*.

II.

The difficulty of finding an old copy of a bygone magazine is considerable, and as most will be unable to read *The Roamer* for themselves until it is finished and published in some more accessible form, it becomes necessary to follow the poem through in detail and to give ample quotations.

The Roamer—or rather the fragment we have of it—is compact and therefore somewhat difficult to epitomize, but it starts out clearly enough with the an-

nouncement of a double duality, that of the higher and lower natures, and that duality referred to above which makes the individual soul perceive that beside its own separate existence it lives as part of the race-soul—a vessel into which are poured for transmission race-ideals and racial traditions. It is through separate manifestations of the race-soul that the “torch” of Mr. Woodberry’s prose works is handed on from generation to generation and from one civilization to the next. The glowing invocation with which the poem opens is chiefly concerned with the race and the possible realization of its long-delayed ideals through American democracy—an idea that was part of the purely American patriotism characteristic of this period of the author’s development. The Roamer himself—the protagonist of the poem—is imaged sometimes as the higher nature—the eternal element in man—doomed to wander for awhile, an exile, in the desert of the world, and sometimes as the race-soul prisoned in the individual and fettered by the earthly elements with which it has been compounded. The distinctions between these two and the whole human entity as ordinarily known to sense, are liable to confuse the inattentive reader, and were it not for the extreme eloquence of the poem—the persistent beauty of line and phrase—so much subtlety and metaphysics would keep the piece from being what it is—a delight to read, a genuine and unquestioned work of art. With the boy’s first sense of the eternal element in him comes, if he be that way gifted, the creative instinct:

*Then as from shadowy pines, before light comes,
A solitary wood-note bursts too soon—
Some bird hath waked, and feels his darkened wings—
Low in the hollow of the sea-blown wood*

*I set my fingers to the unknown stops,
 And blew; and fresh as over quiet fields
 Rises the burden of the bough and briar,
 New music, wild and sweet, blown through the world,
 So rose my idyl; all the valley-side
 Was hushed, and clinging to my lips the reed
 Felt the first tremor of immortal breath;
 And like an angel singing in his birth,
 Aloft the lone and mounting melody
 Moved, darkling, to the bosom of the dawn.*

But the ideal self—"All I could never be," to use Browning's phrase—comes to be imaged as a fair youth thinking noble thoughts, a visible form that cannot be approached, but summing in himself all aspiration, must remain perpetually an object of desire:

*Awe came upon me seeing in his face
 The lineaments of my own all sweetly changed
 To that ideal I hope to wear in heaven.
 So with his passion blending more and more,
 As the dark earth when sinks the starry west,
 Mortal I moved to meet eternal light;
 And, moving, dreamed how that young soul should be
 The flaming of a torch across the years,
 And through the world the rising of a star.*

*Ay me! but what avails to nurse the soul,
 And will the better world, that heaven delays?
 When hath it come? Soon gathered round his heart—
 O, too familiar to this clouded breast—
 Immortal dread, awe of the alien powers
 In this dark sphere,—these vague infinities
 Of matter round the solitude of mind
 With menace, this dull crush of monstrous force
 Crumbling the dense compact, this far-strown world,*

*Abysmal being without mete or bound,
 With endless shadows roved; whence thought, alarmed,
 Strains in its orbit and its casing frame,
 Ranges the vast, and calls from star to star,
 With question of this cold eternity.
 O striving Stress, O everlasting Might,
 In every atom spawning energy
 And cradling life in every blowing germ,
 Storm of the world, swift drift and surge of time
 That lifts the swimmer to the rushing flood
 One moment's space, and thrusts him down to hell,
 And rolls the next aloft, while, age on age,
 Millions of men innumerably spread,
 Faces along the illimitable wave,
 Float up, and look, and sink,—O star-cold Space,
 When hast thou answered, unto whom, or where!*

Soon youth gains an equally clear perception of the evils that are in life, and when this comes, the reality and immanence of the ideal seem lost—

Too mortal is he born whom God doth choose!

This part of the poem is carried forward through a superb succession of wild landscape pictures, until finally when the shock of surprise has worn away, good and evil, beauty and deformity, are seen together, forces eternally in conflict; and youth consecrates itself to the quest of the ideal, knowing well that the pathway will be hard but not yet quite realizing what terrors—material and immaterial—infest it.

*There, by the slope, and worming o'er the edge,
 The narrow track of noble peril ran;
 And, thinly springing, many a lonely sheaf
 Of beamy blades and starry-dipping points*

*Flashed back the battle of the dying world.
 He saw—he sprang—he heard the challenge peal,
 Caught like the mighty blast of Roland dead
 Far-blown from standards of the fallen Christ;
 And light o'erflowed within him, light long sought,
 From the old sources gushing, light divine,
 Whose piercing revelation nought obstructs,
 Created or imagined or devised,
 The masks of mimicry or vestures true,
 Earth's massy mould or the dark breast of man.*

Except for the exquisite lyrical interludes which have the reflective function of the Greek chorus and comment on the action, the remainder of the book is taken up with the description of successive phases of evil that become apparent to the young soul, sometimes wounding it and sometimes causing it to waver in the bitterness of growing despair; for ever as it follows on, mounting higher and higher on its lonely way, it sees more of the evil that is in the life of the present and grows able, with accumulated knowledge, to vision more clearly universal decay, the transitoriness of all things, the worm eternally feeding on the heart of beauty.

*And ever where the far horizons flung
 Round him with mightier folds the starry robe,
 He read the man-myth on the shining hem,—
 Iràn, Chaldea, Egypt,—and more late,
 Divinely springing from the Olympian mount,
 The torch-race of the ever-dying gods,
 Orb after orb of throneless deity;
 And spectral o'er him broke in that frore air
 The burnt-out hopes, and ghosts of prophecy,
 That once from holy hearts rose charioted,*

*And in the zenith hung their mighty faiths,—
 Visions of old, by every mastering race
 Set in the blazing zodiac of time;
 The fiery pillar that brought Israel forth
 Rose like an exhalation; flaming stood
 The Cross that went before imperial Rome;
 Pale swam the moon of Islam dropping blood;
 And out they flickered, brief as shooting stars;
 Then dark the slow recovery of his sight,
 Weary of all that never ceasing death,
 Saw Lethe roll against a purple dawn, . . .*

The close of the book leaves the Roamer apparently overcome by the forces of evil and, like Roland at Roncevalles, consoled only by the sense of his own loyalty:

*And in his ears faint rang the dying blast
 Of Roland dead with all his chivalry.*

The Roamer is a very noble poem, and its connection with the rest of Mr. Woodberry's work is obvious.

CHAPTER V.

Intense spirituality; a passionate loyalty to the ideal with an almost equal devotion to the world of sense, the two being seen oftenest as forces in conflict, or the one as a lure winning the spirit from its consecration to the other; a growing breadth of interest and sympathy issuing in an increased externality and lack of self-centredness; the love of children; an unusually keen appreciation of color and light; a growing perception of the complete inter-relation of all manifestations of the life-spirit; these are the leading characteristics of Mr. Woodberry as a poet. He is of the great Platonic tradition which has been handed down in English poetry by Shelley and Wordsworth, and Shelleyan is his insistence upon love as the means of race-salvation, and upon the complete realization of democracy as the essential step in social progress. His New Englandism, from certain traditional phases of which he subsequently revolted, has been sufficiently pointed out, and there is no need of dwelling further upon that glow of color which came to his poetry from the Mediterranean years; but the thought has not been more than suggested that the poet's development from the subjectivity and localization of interest shown in his early work to that all-embracing sympathy and sense of kinship which make his later poems what they are, may also have been a gift of that older world, where the individual is seen against a background of the ages, and the continuity of life, through perpetual recurrence of bloom and decay, leaves its impress upon the least sensitive mind. Greece is not dead—nor Italy—and bountiful Demeter still pours

upon her Mediterranean lands an inexhaustible gift to mortals. Had it not been for Greece, for the affinity between the author's mind and the great traditions of European culture, his poetry would have been a different, a less intensely living thing than it is.

One as familiar as Mr. Woodberry must be with the imaginative literature of the world—one with the scholar's perspective—can only create genuine poetry of his own if he is of the few who being driven onward by a sort of inner necessity, are actually called to do so. A poet, for example, who had never heard of Rousseau, Chateaubriand, the ingenious Mrs. Behn, "Paul and Virginia," or "Daphnis and Chloe," might invent for himself the theory of the return to nature and express it with passionate sincerity; but one to whom the idea was familiar as an element in the culture of the race would have to bring to his announcement of it something new and peculiarly his own to make his message seem of importance either to himself or to a reader similarly endowed. It is the passion in Mr. Woodberry, the intensity of his spirituality, the persistence and conviction with which he clings to the ideal that, with the peculiar iridescence of his style, give to his poetry its distinctive value.

In the work of poets of Mr. Woodberry's type there are over-tones, the glow of reflected lights which bring to their creations an added wealth of beauty. The reader whose mind is sufficiently stocked, who is sensitively receptive of these impressions, in reading such poems reads also Sophocles and Virgil, Dante and Petrarch; he whose ear is attuned to catch the over-tones perceives—subconsciously it may be—that each poem has a beauty added to its own beauty, a duality of existence, like that which has been referred to in another connection, each being seen as a thing having

life and beauty of its own and seen at the same time as a new manifestation of the race-mind, a new blossoming of the human spirit. The glamor brought to a poem by its overtones, by the perception of its flowering from a stalk which is rooted deep in race-consciousness and brings forth blooms of beauty in perpetual succession, gives it a double power of appeal, an effectiveness that depends on what the reader is able to read into it—to the prepared ground on which it falls. This theory, like some others that have been referred to in the more general considerations of the present volume, has been developed by Mr. Woodberry himself in his prose works and only a very minor aspect of it can be illustrated here. Thomas Hardy has a poem which commences,

"When I set out for Lyonesse";

and the phrase has all the romance of the Arthurian stories back of it; if the author's destination had been Casterbridge the line would produce in a reader familiar with Mr. Hardy's novels an entirely different set of reactions, it would call to his mind new and equally distinct images; but if the word Liverpool should be substituted for the word Lyonesse, the line would have no overtones at all, no meaning other than geographical except to the few who happen to have intimate associations with that place. Either substitution would alter and limit the appeal. A word like Lyonesse has its overtones, but ideas and ideals which have lived on from generation to generation, in gathering to themselves an accretion of spiritual significance, have gained an existence more real than that of any transient reality. The perception of these things counts in art—and in life; and one cannot justly appreciate a poem unless he knows whereof the author

speaks. Mr. Woodberry's poetry presupposes the existence of things of the spirit and some of it demands from the reader an openness to spiritual contacts. The poet's practical idealism is his own by right of personal possession; it is also a part of the inherited traditions of European culture with which he is familiar, and the reader who is able to see in it the glamor of familiar things, old aspirations, old strivings of the spirit, will not only get more out of it than one who is not, but will also be able to appreciate more justly and more keenly those elements of beauty in the author's work which are peculiarly his own.

Superficially, Mr. Woodberry with his idealism, is somewhat of a poet's poet, his appeal coming most strongly to those who find the air he breathes native, or at least, not wholly unfamiliar. Looking more deeply than this, he is the poet of youth, giving, as he does, voice to those usually evanescent ideals and aspirations whose flowering is of the springtime; but pursuing the inquiry still further, we find that mood of longing which he has made distinctively his own, that passionate craving for permanence, the ideal, in a world of impermanence, which is the spiritual burden of his message, to be one that lies deep in the general heart of man and is a universal phase of human experience. Youth can follow most easily—at least in imagination—Mr. Woodberry's starry flight; but there is hardly anyone who does not find at one time or another welling up through buried strata of consciousness that mood of aspiration which the poet has given his years to express; and a writer of verse whose characteristic view of life, whose message, is of general human significance has in his subject matter the substance of poetry whose value is enduring, and has at least one characteristic of a major rather than of

a minor poet.

No attempt to estimate Mr. Woodberry's position as a vital force in American life and letters—and this is an attempt which the present writer does not feel called upon to make—can afford to forget for a moment that while his poetry may be the final distillation of what he has in him, the writing of verse is only one of the ways in which he has found means of self-expression. He is best known to the world at large as a writer of prose, a constructive thinker whose sympathetic, interpretative criticisms of art and of life have won him a place of distinction among his contemporaries; but beside this, there is that peculiar power of his personality which has affected strongly the young men who have come into contact with him in his classrooms or elsewhere, and is a fact recognized even by those who are entirely out of sympathy with the man and with his work. He has a strange ability to evoke loyalty in the most curiously diverse kinds of people—poets and business men, leaders of fashion and outcasts, intellectuals and Calabrian peasants—and the fact of his having this power even over some who probably never have read anything he has written, or who read it only because it is his, is a sufficient comment upon the genuineness of that sympathetic understanding and idealism which are traits of his work. Poetry is an expression of personality and it may well be that that passionate sincerity, that unworldly and unwavering insistence upon spiritual values which we have noted in the one may be in the other what has drawn men to him. Whether or not that ideal world of which most catch fleeting glimpses and which to some seems home, be only another illusion of the senses, the enduring perception of it made Wordsworth what he was, and in Mr. Wood-

berry's case has drawn to him, through his life as through his art, the heart of youth.

Poetry is a shadow, the imperfect representation of something else; it is also the opening of a door, and the function of criticism is to show what door has been opened and to help eyes that are unaccustomed to all but objects of common familiarity see the beauty that is beyond. If a poet lifts only a corner of the painted veil, if he brings to us even a little of the white radiance, his mission is accomplished; and the peculiarity of Mr. Woodberry's poetry is that what it preserves of the light beyond is comparatively unstained by transmission.

Since the publication of the 1914 volume, the occasional appearance in the magazines of poems by Mr. Woodberry has given evidence of his continued creative activity, and at the close of such a study as this it is pleasant to look forward. The war must have stirred him deeply, and whether his next publication be the completed *Roamer* or a collection of new and shorter pieces it will be interesting to see how his belief in the coming of a new age, his faith in the realization of brotherhood may have changed or developed. Mr. Woodberry is a profound thinker as well as a poet; and his message of idealism, of spirituality and brotherhood is one that America should ponder.*

*Since these lines were sent to the printer the Woodberry Society has announced the immediate publication of a volume of sonnets written by Mr. Woodberry and entitled *Ideal Passion*.

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The Voice was a country weekly newspaper, published (an Exeter classmate says) in New Hampshire. The editor offered two columns to the Exeter school boys, in connection with his contribution to the new Academy building. Mr. Woodberry was one of the six school editors. In this paper appeared his first printed poem—The Greek Beggar (?)—and other things. No copy known.

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Vol. XVII., No. 1—Feb. 20, 1874—Sonnet. Shelley.

Vol. XVII., No. 6—May 1, 1874—Desecration.

Mr. Woodberry was one of the editors of Vol. XVII.

Vol. XVIII., Supplement Oct. 3, 1874—Sonnet on Reading Spenser.

Vol. XVIII., Supplement Oct. 3, 1874—Cigarette Ash.

Vol. XVIII., No. 2—Oct. 6, 1874—The Violet Crown. (See Lowell's comment on this poem quoted Nebraska Literary Magazine, Vol. I, No. 1.)

Vol. XVIII., No. 5—Nov. 27, 1874—Sonnet. By the Night Sea.

Vol. XVIII., No. 6—Dec. 11, 1874—Paul at Athens. A Cynic Philosopher and his Scholar Lycius.

Mr. Woodberry was not an editor of Vol. XVIII., being absent from college.

*The compiler regrets that he has been obliged to leave to the industry or good fortune of some future bibliographer the details which should have been given under numbers I, VI, VIII and XVIII.

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Vol. XIX., No. 2—March 5, 1875—Lydian Airs (Three poems).

Vol. XIX., No. 2—March 5, 1875—The Life and Death of Pietro, A. D. 1348.

Vol. XIX., No. 3—March 19, 1875—Lydian Airs (Two poems).

Vol. XIX., No. 4—April 2, 1875—The Philosophical Department (Prose).

Vol. XIX., No. 5—April 16, 1875—The Wanderer's Refrain.

Vol. XIX., No. 5—April 16, 1875—Sonnet on an Easter Sunrise.

Vol. XIX., No. 5—April 16, 1875—Sonnet. Unnoticed Love.

Vol. XIX., No. 9—June 16, 1875—The Study of Ideas (Prose).

Mr. Woodberry was one of the editors of Vol. XIX.

Vol. XX., No. 1—Oct. 1, 1875—Aristophanes Apology (Review).

Vol. XX., No. 2—Oct. 8, 1875—In May Days.

Vol. XX., No. 4—Nov. 5, 1875—The Antigone at Harvard (Prose).

Vol. XX., No. 5—Nov. 19, 1875—An Evolutionist's Idea of Harvard (Prose).

Vol. XX., No. 6—Dec. 3, 1875—The Culture of our Students (Prose).

Vol. XX., No. 8—Jan. 10, 1876—Victorian Poets (Review).

Vol. XX., No. 10—Feb. 4, 1876—Song.

Vol. XX., No. 10—Feb. 4, 1876—Ode to a Forest Rose.

Vol. XX., No. 10—Feb. 4, 1876—Dansville Hills.

Mr. Woodberry was one of the editors of Volume XX.

Vol. XXI., No. 1—Feb. 18, 1876—After Sunset.

Vol. XXI., No. 1—Feb. 18, 1876—Serenade.

Vol. XXI., No. 3—March 17, 1876—Parting Song.

Vol. XXI., No. 6—April 28, 1876—The Phi Beta Kappa Supper (?) (Prose).

Vol. XXI., No. 10—June 23, 1876—The Harvard Decalogue.

Mr. Woodberry was one of the editors of Volume XXI.

IV.

1876.

Verses from the *Harvard Advocate*. Hurd & Houghton. New York. 1876.

This volume contains fourteen poems by G. E. W., reprinted from the *Advocate*.

V.

October, 1876-June, 1878.

Contributions (verse and prose) to the *Harvard Advocate*. Among Mr. Woodberry's contributions, many were unsigned

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editorials, etc. Those known to be by him are:

Vol. XXII., No. 9—Jan. 26, 1877—*Arachne's Spinning*.

Vol. XXII., No. 10—Feb. 2, 1877—*Prosit Neujahr*.

Mr. Woodberry was an editor of Vol. XXII.

Vol. XXIII., No. 3—March 16, 1877—*Lines Upon Hearing Some Music*.

Vol. XXIII., No. 5—April 10, 1877—*Sonnet*. After reading Keats' letters. (The reference is to Lord Houghton's Life.)

Vol. XXIII., No. 8—*The Senior Petitions*.

Vol. XXIV., No. 5—Nov. 16, 1877—*Lines in Autumn*.

VI.

1876-1891.

Reviews in *Atlantic*. Boston. The great bulk of these were 1880-1891. The *Atlantic* index, 1889, lists seventy-three titles.

VII.

1877.

The Relation of Pallas Athene to Athens. Oratio a Georgio Edvardo Woodberry. Written for the Harvard Commencement, 1877. Privately printed for the Signet Society of Harvard University, 1877. Paper. Eleven pages. Thirty copies printed.

VIII.

1878-1903.

Reviews in *The Nation*. New York.

The great bulk of these were 1878-79 and 1884-91. They are unsigned, but there is said to be an index giving the authors of all unsigned articles in the vaults at the office of *The Nation*.

IX.

1879.

History of Wood-Engraving (two articles), in *Harper's Magazine*.

X.

1881.

The Fortunes of Literature under the American Republic. *Fortnightly Review*. May. Reprinted in *Eclectic Magazine*.

XI.

1882.

The Real Issues in the University. A public letter by Professors Church, Emerson, and Woodberry. Written by G. E.

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W. Issued February, 1882. Appeared also translated into German in the *Nebraska Staats-Anzeiger*.

XII.

1883.

Trial printing of The North Shore Watch. July 22. One proof. Lincoln, Nebraska.

XIII.

1883.

The North Shore Watch.
Boards. vel. back, 200 copies, Privately Printed (by subscription). With engraved frontispiece.

XIV.

1883.

A History of Wood Engraving. Illustrated.
Harper & Brothers, New York.

XV.

1885.

Edgar Allan Poe.
Houghton, Mifflin & Co. Boston. With portrait.
In American Men of Letters Series.

XVI.

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Second Series. New verses from the *Harvard Advocate*, 1876-1886. Privately printed by Kilbourne Tompkins, No. 79 Cedar Street, New York. Contains four poems by G. E. W. that appeared in the *Advocate* between October, 1876, and June, 1878.

XVII.

1887.

My Country: An Ode.
Privately printed, 50 copies. Blue paper covers. Published in *Atlantic Monthly*, July, 1887.

XVIII.

1888. *The Boston Post*.

G. E. W. was Literary Editor for a year and wrote a great deal for it.

XIX.

1888.

Song of Promise. Words by George Edward Woodberry. Composed by John Knowles Paine, Op. 43, for the Cincinnati

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Musical Festival of May, 1888. Published by the John Church Co. of Cincinnati. Paper covers. (Words from "My Country.")

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Authors at Home. Edited by J. L. and J. B. Gilder. Cassell Publishing Co. New York.

Article, James Russell Lowell (republished from the *Critic*).

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XXV.

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The Complete Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley; The Text newly Collated and Revised and Edited, with a Memoir and Notes by George Edward Woodberry. Centenary edition in four volumes.

Houghton, Mifflin & Co. Boston. With portrait.

Same. Large paper. In eight parts. 250 sets printed.

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Published by Little, Brown & Co. Boston. 2 Vols.

XXVIII.

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Memorial Celebration of the Sixtieth Anniversary of the Birth of Edwin Booth. Held in the Madison Square Garden Concert Hall, November 13, 1893, by The Players. Contains Elegy by G. E. W., pp. 44-52.

The Players' Elegy on the Death of Edwin Booth: Read at the Memorial Service, held under the direction of The Players, in the Madison Square Garden Concert Hall, November 13, 1893. Privately printed, New York, 1893. Thirty-five copies numbered and signed. The De Vinne Press. Blue paper covers. The poem was first published in *The Evening Post* (New York), November 13, 1893.

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The English Drama: Its Rise and Development to 1640. By Thomas R. Price, G. E. Woodberry and A. V. W. Jackson. Syllabus (20). Albany. Regents University Extension Department.

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The Works of Edgar Allan Poe, Newly Collected and Edited, with a Memoir, Critical Introductions, and Notes, by E. C. Stedman and George E. Woodberry. 10 Vols. Illustrated. Stone & Kimball. Chicago.

(1) Ordinary edition. (2) Large paper. (3) In vellum with drawings by Beardsley.

The Same. Special issue. The Colonial Company, Pittsburgh, 1903. (1) Ordinary edition. (2) Autograph edition. (3) Bibliophile edition.

The Same. Duffield and Company, New York, 1907. Single volume, The Poems, etc., 1907.

The Same. Charles Scribner's Sons. New York. 1914. Pocket edition, in cloth and flexible leather.

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Selections from the Poems of Aubrey de Vere, edited, with a Preface, by G. E. W.

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Memories. *Nebraska Literary Magazine*, Vol. I., No. 1. May.

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To A. V. W. J.—.

Twenty copies printed without title-page. De Vinne Press. Blue paper covers.

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1895.

Household Waifs from many Years, by Known and Unknown Poets. Arranged by G. E. W. (with introductory quatrain by G. E. W.). Privately printed, New York, Christmas, 1895. De Vinne Press. 20 Copies. Blue paper covers.

XXXV.

189-?

The Roamer, Book I. 6 copies. Privately printed. De Vinne Press. Blue paper covers.

XXXVI.

1896-98.

Library of the World's Best Literature, Ancient and Modern. Edited by Charles Dudley Warner. R. S. Peale & Co. New York.

Articles, Arnold, Coleridge, Shelley.

XXXVII.

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Columbia College.

English XIII. Parts i., ii. Notes for students, on English Poetry of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, with a brief bibliography for dramatic reading. Two pamphlets.

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English II. Book of the Course, Sect. 1. Red paper. 42 pages. A re-print of Rough Notes, 1896-97, and Guide Notes, 1898-99, a pamphlet and five leaflets for student use, together with bibliographical lists.

XXXVIII.

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The Macmillan Co. New York.

A reprint of "Studies in Letters and Life," together with later prefaces, articles, etc. The essay on The Promise of Keats was accidentally omitted. The essay on Whittier was reprinted, *Boston Evening Transcript*, Dec. 14, 1907. (Essays on Shelley, Landor, Browning, Byron, Arnold, Coleridge, Lowell, Whittier, and others.)

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The Complete Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley. Cambridge edition. (One Vol.) Houghton, Mifflin & Co. Boston. Newly and completely annotated. With a portrait.

LII.

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One Hundred Books Famous in English Literature, with Facsimiles of the Title Pages, and an introduction by George Edward Woodberry. The Grolier Club of the City of New York. 305 copies printed.

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Nathaniel Hawthorne.

American Men of Letters Series. Houghton, Mifflin & Co. Boston. Dark red cloth. With portrait.

Same. Light red cloth. Uncut. Paper label.

Same. Large paper. 600 copies printed.

LIV.

1903.

Journal of Comparative Literature. Quarterly.

New York, McClure, Phillips & Co. Edited by G. E. W. Four numbers issued. No. 1 has editorial by G. E. W., also separately issued as a leaflet. This is all he wrote for the *Journal*.

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To Nineteen Three, Columbia. The Nineteen Hundred and Three Class Book. Published by the Class in June, 1903. Also privately printed as a leaflet. Four pages.

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Representative English comedies, with introductory essays, etc., by various writers, under the general editorship of Charles Mills Gayley. The Macmillan Co. New York. (Robert Green: his place in comedy. pp. 385-394.)

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Exeter Ode. Read at the dedication of Alumni Hall, Phillips Exeter Academy, June 17, 1903. Privately printed leaflet—eight pages.

Published in Exercises incident to the General Reunion of the Alumni of Phillips Exeter Academy on the occasion of the opening of the new Alumni Hall, 1903. pp. 31-35. 1904.

LIX.

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Requiem. Thomas Randolph Price.
Privately printed—one sheet.

LX.

Privately printed. De Vinne Press. New York. Blue paper covers. Six copies printed.

The First Two Books of The Roamer.

LXI.

1903.

Poems of the House and Other Poems, by Elizabeth M. Olmsted. Privately printed. De Vinne Press. 200 numbered copies. Contains editorial note and Sonnet: To the Author on her Golden Wedding, by G. E. W.; and Sonnet to G. E. W., on his Twentieth Birthday. With portrait.

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New International Encyclopaedia. Article, Shelley.

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Chamber's Cyclopaedia of English Literature. 3 Vols.

The general article on American Colonial Literature and a few notes on its authors are by G. E. W.

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The Torch. Eight lectures on Race Power in Literature, delivered before the Lowell Institute of Boston, 1903.

(Man and the Race, The Language of all the World, The Titan Myth, I. and II., Spenser, Milton, Wordsworth, Shelley.)

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Select Poems of Shelley. Edited with Introduction and Notes. (The essay on Shelley's Poetry is new.)

D. C. Heath & Co., Boston. Belles-Lettres Series.

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The Defence of Poesie, etc., by Sir Philip Sidney, edited with Introduction by G. E. W.

The Merrymount Press, Boston. The Humanists' Library. 303 copies.

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The Old Farmer's Almanac by Robert B. Thomas. Boston, William Ware & Co., No. 117. Paper covers. Contains Sonnet: Etna.

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Issued also as a leaflet.

XCI.

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One hundred copies signed by the author, numbered and specially bound, were issued for members of the Woodberry Society.

*The Publications of the Woodberry Society can be obtained through the book stores by application to William B. Symmes, Jr., Secretary, 55 Liberty Street, New York City.

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*Ideal Passion: Sonnets. (Announced for publication in
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* The Publications of the Woodberry Society can be obtained through
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55 Liberty Street, New York City.

ADDENDA.

A.

General Editor National Studies in American Letters. The Macmillan Co., New York. Four Vols. No writing by G. E. W. The titles in the series are:

Old Cambridge. By Thomas Wentworth Higginson, 1899.

Brook Farm. By Lindsay Swift, 1900.

The Clergy in American Life and Letters. By Daniel Du-lany Addison, 1900.

The Hoosiers. By Meredith Nicholson, 1900.

B.

General Editor Columbia Studies in Comparative Literature. The Macmillan Co. New York. Eight Vols. No writing by G. E. W. The titles in the series are:

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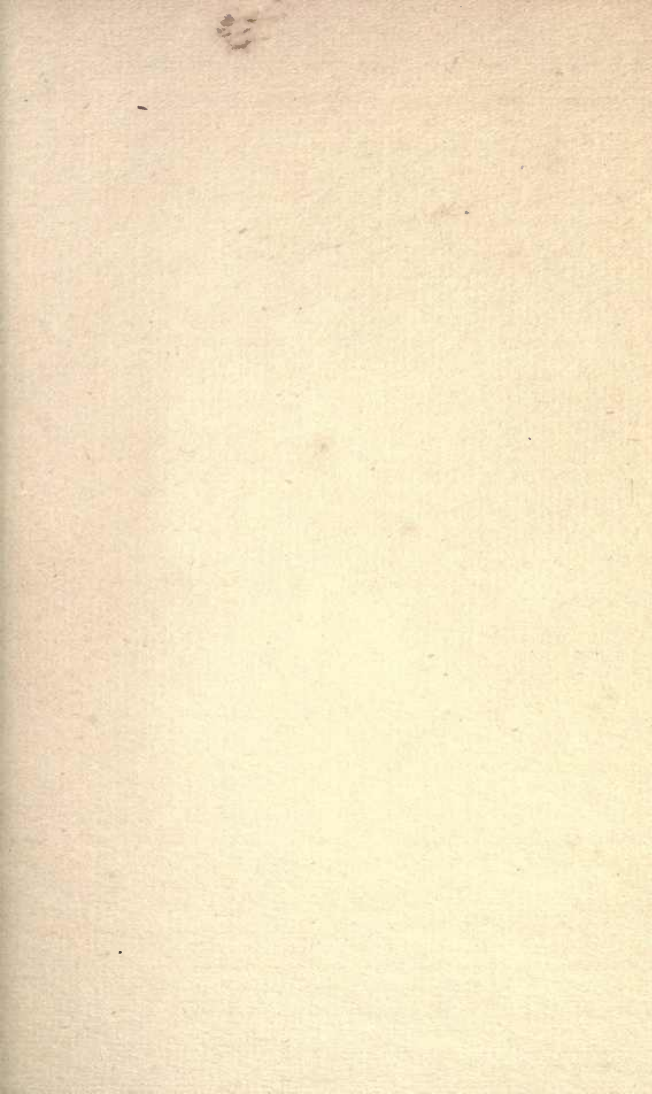
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Platonism in English Poetry. By John Smith Harrison, 1903.

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